

2
A Good Minister of Jesus Christ.

A
Funeral SERMON

For the Reverend

Mr. RICHARD STEEL;
A faithful and useful Minister of the Gospel.

Delivered *Novemb. 27. 1692.*

By *George Hamond*, M. A. and
Minister of the Gospel.

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THE
P R E F A C E,

To my Respected, and Beloved
Friends, who were the Special
Charge of Reverend Mr. Steel.

THere are two Things which
gave the Occasion of writ-
ting this Preface: 1. That
I may lay before you the Reasons,
why I make this particular Ad-
dress to you. 2. That I may
take this Advantage, to offer some
Requests to you.

A 2

1. The

1. *The following Discourse is now exposed to publick View, because the Subject insisted upon in it, is of general Use and Concernment to all who have a due Sense of Religion, and really look after the Welfare of their precious immortal Souls. For therein, they are directed how to make a Difference between such as feed them only with Chaff, or Ashes, and those that break to them the Bread of Life : Between such as subvert them, and those that build them up in the most holy Faith : Between such as would engage them in furious Contentions, and those that endeavour to*
keep

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Keep them in the Unity of the Spirit, and Bond of Peace: Between such as follow cunningly-devised Fables, and speak Lies in Hypocrisy, and those that rightly divide the Word of Truth. Of what Importance these things are, the Serious and Considerate will quickly apprehend. But it is likely that they who are immerst in the Love of the World, or infatuated with the Pleasures of the Flesh, will despise or ridicule them. If what is therein offered, shall, by the Blessing of God, make Impression upon any, and prevail with them to enquire, and search into the holy Will of God, declared in the Scriptures, touching

A 3 these

these Matters, I shall greatly rejoice.

But I think that ye are, in a special manner, concerned to review and ponder this Sermon, upon those very Grounds that induced me to make this particular Inscription of it to you; and my Reasons are two.

First; Because it was upon your Invitation and Request (as it was represented to me) that I undertook the Preaching of my Brother Steel's Funeral Sermon. It is true, that Application was made to a very Reverend and Excellent Servant of God, to have performed that Labour

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Labour of Love, and that I did earnestly importune him to accept it ; but he absolutely refused it. For though he professed his very great Esteem for the Memory of Mr. Steel, and that he would be ready upon all Occasions, to shew it ; yet he concluded, that it was most proper for me to perform that Service, as being, by the Providence of God, brought into such a Conjunction with him in the Ministration of the Gospel. Whereby I saw, that there was no way to change his Resolution, or to invalidate his Reason. This I now mention to you, that ye may have a plain, tho brief, Account of that Procedure ;

and so to prevent, or remove, some Surmises, which, it may be, have been entertained by such as determine things meerly according to their own Preconceptions or Prejudices. And now, I hope, that none will interpret my solliciting of that eminent Person to have yielded to that Request which was made to him, to have proceeded from any Unwillingness in me to afford my Service (such as it is) toward the solemnizing of my deceased Brother's Funeral. For to that I was forward enough, both out of that Affection and Honour which I had for him; and out of the Desire which I had to gratify you;

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you; especially in that which might conduce to the promoting of your Faith, Holiness and Comfort. Upon the whole, I think my first Reason must be allowed to have its Weight, That the Motion of Preaching the Sermon, coming from you, it is fit, that now it should be tendered to you.

The second Reason, why I direct these Papers to you, is, Because as soon as the Sermon was preached, ye requested me to make it publick. In this also I complied with your Desires, tho not without some Reluctance from my own Temper and Inclination, which
was,

was, and is, never to be forward to thrust out any Thing of Mine into the World. For I saw there were others far better qualified for Writing, who have abundantly furnished those that will make use of their Labours, with great variety of profitable and excellent Books. And let me have leave to add farther, That tho I complied with your Motion to Print the Sermon, without much Gainsaying, yet I have been inflexible to the Importunities of others, in some like Instances. Seeing then, that from first to last, ye have influenced me in this Undertaking, ye may reasonably claim

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a special Interest in the following Discourse. And I doubt not, but ye will kindly accept this Tender of it to you.

2. *Having laid before you the Reasons that moved me to give you a special Interest in the following Discourse, I shall now subjoin those Requests, which I desire may be granted by you. I have, ye see, complied with your Proposals: And I hope ye will shew yourselves as ductil to my Demands, especially when ye find that I ask nothing of you, but what your Duty and Concernment obligeth you to yield unto.*

1. I

1. *I entreat you frequently and seriously to revolve in your Minds, and carefully to recollect those things which ye have heard from, or observed in your late worthy Pastor, that may, in a more special manner, be instructive or directive to you in your Faith and Obedience. And that not only what he taught you in his publick Preaching, but also in his Visits and Conferences with you. For therein, he used to drop something that might more neerly touch your Circumstances; as by answering your Cases, or by exciting and directing you in the conscientious Discharge of your Duty toward God and Man.*

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2. *I desire you who are Traders and Dealers in the World, to have frequent recourse to his Book, entituled, The Tradesman's Calling; and to peruse it, not only as a Divertisement to entertain your spare-time withal, but to select those Rules and Directions that are most accommodate to your Employments; and to observe them, that ye may please God, obtain his Blessing, and be a Credit to Religion.*

3. *I recommend to you his Book, entituled, An Antidote against Distractions; and so to acquaint your selves with it, that it may become*

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come familiar to you, and leave such Impressions upon you, as may abide in your Hearts, and actually to excite them, when ye are exercising your selves in Religious Duties.

4. Endeavour to write after his Copy, and to imitate him in Works of Charity and Mercy, in which he was very abundant, and very prudent.

5. Approve the Sincerity of that Love and Respect which ye professed your selves to bear to your deceased Pastor, by your Readiness to perform any Office of Love, Kindness or Assistance to his disconsolate Widow, and his Children, in any thing

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thing wherein ye may gratify
them.

6. *Maintain Union and Con-*
cord among your selves. Let no-
thing be done thro Strife, or
Vain-glory, but in Lowliness
of Mind; let each esteem o-
ther better than themselves.
Look not every Man on his
own things, but every Man al-
so on the things of others. Let
this Mind be in you, which was
also in Christ Jesus.

7. *My concluding Request to*
you all, is, Let your Conversati-
on be as becometh the Gospel
of Christ. Be Blameless, and
Harmless, the Sons of God,
with-

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without Rebuke, in the midst
of a crooked and perverse Na-
tion, among whom ye shine
as Lights in the World.

*I leave these my Requests with
you: And commend you to God,
and to the Word of his Grace,
which is able to build you up,
and to give you an Inheritance
among them that are sancti-
fied.*

*Books sold by John Lawrence at the Ange^l
in the Poultry.*

A Sermon preached on the Thanksgiving-Day
at Crosby-Square. By Samuel Slater, Minister
of the Gospel. 4to.

A Sermon preached at the Funeral of Mr. Rey-
nolds, Minister of the Gospel. 4to.

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versal Remedy; being excellent Physical Receipts.*
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**A Good Minister
OF
JESUS CHRIST.**

2 Tim. II. 15.

*Study to shew thy self approved
unto God, a Work-man that need-
eth not to be ashamed, rightly
dividing the Word of Truth.*

WE are, this Day, to solemn-
ize the Funeral of a
good and faithful Ser-
vant of Jesus Christ, who is now

Bentred

entred into the Joy of his Lord. Wife he was, and skilful in turning many to Righteousness; and now (as we have good ground to believe) he shineth as the Brightness of the Firmament. He is now no more in the Land of the Living; and many they are, who will find him wanting. One of the Pillars is removed out of the Temple of God upon Earth (a). The Ministers of Christ, in and about this City, will quickly be sensible that there is one of the Watch-men taken away. His desolate Family is full of Lamentation, because the Covering thereof will no more overshadow it. Some weep for the loss of their Spiritual Father, who begat them to Christ through the Gospel: Others

thers miss their Nourisher, who was wont to give them their portion of Meat in due season. And as for my self, I am deprived of a Brother greatly honoured and beloved by me, whom I always found an helpful and concordant Fellow-Labourer in the Work of the Gospel. On all hands, there are those who recount their Loss; but to him to die is gain, for he is departed and gone to Christ, which is best of all.

I need to say no more touching the special Occasion of this Meeting, as being known to you all, as ye declare by your coming hither in greater Numbers than usual. But it is likely that some will be disappointed of their Expectation; for I suppose, that several came to hear an eminent Servant of God,

who is richly furnished with all Kinds of Ministerial Abilities; whereas they now find, that the Providence of God hath laid this Service upon one who is destitute of those Accomplishments: nevertheless, I shall endeavour, through the Help of Christ, to speak the Words of Truth and Soberness.

And that ye may know beforehand, what Subject is provided for your Attention, (and so your Thoughts will be the better fixed) I shall let you understand, that my Design is to set before you the rough Draught, or Representation of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle stiles him, *1 Tim. 4. 6.* And I think my Choice will be for your Edification: For while I describe such an one, I shall but hold up to your View a Glass or
Mirror,

of Jesus Christ.

5

Mirror, wherein ye may behold the reflected Portraiture of our deceased Brother. And when ye maturely consider his Idea, ye cannot but find your Thoughts running into such Issues as these; He was lately with us; and did we then understand what a Jewel we possessed? He is now taken away, and are we duly apprehensive of our Loss? It is a common Instance of our Infirmary, and Inadvertency, that we seldom prize Mercies according to their proper Worth, Excellency and Usefulness, until we have lost them; and then it is usual to hear Men breathing out *Job's Lamentation, O that I were as in Months past.* Let us then become so wise, as thankfully and faithfully to improve present Blessings and Advantages, lest

our Saviour's Minatory Prediction overtake us; *The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and shall not see it.* (b)

And now, I shall, without farther prefacing, apply my self to handle the Words which I read to you. They are directed to *Timothy* in a way of Admonition or Advice; *Study to shew thy self approved unto God.* — But when ye thorowly ponder them, ye may perceive, that in them is contained the *Delincation of a good Minister of Jesus Christ*, and that drawn by the skilful Hand of the Apostle *Paul*, as it was held and guided by the Holy Ghost himself. But, in framing his Character, he thought it
not

of Jesus Christ.

not enough to shew himself alone;
or by himself: For he placeth near
him the Image or Picture of a wor-
dy, proud and wrangling Pretender.
Thus, in one Frame, ye often be-
hold the Picture of a beautiful
Person, with a deformed Negro or
ugly Satyr standing by him: For
Contraries illustrate one another.
In the Canticles, the Church of
Christ is represented as the fairest
among Women, but it is placed
as a Lilly among Thorns (c). The
like Course doth the Apostle take
here. He sets forth a good Mi-
nister of Jesus Christ in very live-
ly Colours; and withal, he depaints
a vain-glorious, contentious Sophi-
ster. Neither can we well read
the Text, but our Eye will glance
B 4 upon

(c) Cant. 1, 11. compared with Chap. 2. 2.

upon the Words which immediately go before it, and those that follow after it, In which he discovers a bad Minister; that when we compare him with a good one, and are made sensible of the Contrariety that is between them, we may cleave to the one, and relinquish the other. The Defor-
 mities and malignant Qualities of a bad Minister, are laid open in the 14th and 16th Verses: the Sum whereof is this; *That a bad Minister is one who strives about Words to no profit, but to the subverting of the Hearers:* and he is one, whose Art and Occupation lies in prophane and vain Bablings, which tend to the increase of more Ungodliness. We must then allow a little of our time to search out his Marks and Properties, though
 very

very cursorily. And if ye well observe him, he will quickly discover his Spirit and Temper; for he is a Man of Heat, ready to strive; but not apt to teach. He hath a Torrent of Words, but they are empty and insignificant. (d) He is all Tempest and Whirlwind, to rend and tear in pieces; but he is a Stranger to the *Things that make for Peace*. But the *Servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient: In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth* (e). The contentious Wrangler is one who will dispute every thing to the shaking

(d) *καυοδωμιος* (e) 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25.

shaking of the very Foundations of Religion, but would have nothing settled or determined. It was the grave Aphorism of a Person of great Experience among us, *That the Itch of Disputing, bred the Scab in the Church* (f). It must needs be very grievous to such as love Truth and Peace, to see so many Volumes of Controversial Writings, in which the contending Parties do asperse and damn one another; and yet when the Matter in debate is calmly stated, it will appear, in several Instances, that it is only a Strife about Words (g) that fills up a great part of the Wrangle.

(f) Sir Henry Wotton; *Disputandi pruritus peperit scabiem Ecclesie.* (g) 1 Tim. 6. 4.
—ἀλλὰ νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεως καὶ λογαριασμοῦ.

gle. And therefore, did we attend unto that which the Apostle here declares, we might find enough to make a sober Person to be for ever out of love with all hot and furious Contentions; for he fixeth two black and disgraceful Blots upon them: 1. *That these strifes about Words are unprofitable*: They have in them *οὐδὲν χεῖμαρον*: They have nothing in them that may make a Man wiser or better. And to disparage them the more, he adds, Titus 3. 9. *That they are unprofitable and vain (b)*. Every discreet Person before he engage in any Undertaking of consequence, will deliberate and consider: *Cui bono*? What Advantage or Benefit

(b) *ἀνωφελες, καὶ ματαιαί.*

nefit is to be expected? It is a very serious Question, and fit to be propounded to many Disputers; To what End do they pester the Church of God with their needless, unprofitable and vain Controversies, and thereby disorder themselves, and disturb others? Whatsoever doth not edify, is without the Compass of the Charge and Employment of a good Minister of Jesus Christ. He hath Work enough to do about things necessary and profitable. 'Tis possible, that some other things may be *lawful*; yet if they be not expedient, if they do not edify, he may let them alone, and not meddle with them (*).

I

(*) 1 Cor. 10. 22. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; — but all things edify not.*

I could heartily wish, that the Apostolical Canon were better observed, by us all, 1 Cor. 14. 26. *Let all things be done to edifying.*

2. Though it might be sufficient to caution us against Strifes about Words, to tell us, That they are unprofitable and vain; yet, to beget in us a greater Averſation to them, the Apostle adds, That they are very mischievous; for *they subvert the Hearers, and will increase to more Ungodliness.* The Work of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, is to *build up* his Hearers in Knowledg, Faith, Holiness and Comfort; and to that end, to nourish them with the sound Doctrine of the Grace of God: Acts 20. 32. *And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which*

is able to build you up: — They are then the Ministers of Satan, who make it their business to subvert their Hearers; To turn them upside down; as the Word signifies, Matth. 21. 12. And overthrew the Tables of the Money-Changers (i). Satan is half sure to make a Prey of such as he hath so unsettled, as that they have no stable Foundation to bottom upon. When Men become Sceptricks in the Essentials of Religion, they are in the next Disposition to become Atheists: And such Instruments of Satan as will serve him to subvert their Hearers, will also lend him their Help to edifice in Gehennam, to build them

(i) τὰς τραπέζας — καὶ τὰς πρῆς.

them up for Hell; and the effectual way to do so, is for them to deride and ridicule all serious Godliness, and to flatter or harden Men in their vicious Courses; and then ye may be sure they will be good (or rather bad) Proficients in the School of the Devil, for they grow worse and worse (k). In brief; It is the Devil who is the greatest Gainer by unprofitable Sermons and furious Contentions. For, by them, the Spirits of Men are exasperated, the secure Sinners are hardened, Charity is expelled, Divisions are perpetuated, edifying Doctrine is excluded, and every evil Work befriended: For where Envy and
Strife

(k) 2 Tim. 3. 13. *condemnation and to deliver.*

Strife are maintained, there will be Confusion and every evil VVork (1).

Having said so much of the bad Minister, whom we could not but take notice of, the Apostle pointing him out to us, we shall dismiss him, and commend to you the Apostle's Admonition; 2 Tim. 3. 5. *Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof; from such turn away.*

And now we shall prosecute the fair and amiable Character of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle here lays it before Timothy for his Imitation; q. d. O my Son Timothy, be not thou like unto those Affecters of Vain-glory
and

(1) Jam. 3. 15.

and Applause, who (by Wit and Sophistry) will undertake to prove and disprove, whatsoever their Humour or Interest shall prompt them unto. Their Words may be copious, and well placed; their Periods handsom, and of an artificial Composure: But what will all this advantage *the Doctrine which is according to Godliness*? Nay, you may be sure, their frivolous Disputes and fiery Contentions, will obstruct it. Therefore do thou (O Man of God) bid defiance to Pride and Passion; *And do thou follow after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness (m): Give Attendance to Reading, to*
C Exhor-

(m) 1 Tim. 6. 11.

Exhortation, to Doctrine. Take heed to thy self, and to thy Doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee (n): And (to sum up all) study to shew thy self approved unto God, a Work-man that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. If thou observe these things, thou shalt be a good Minister of Jesus Christ (o).

That ye may, then, have a more clear and distinct View of such an excellent Person, as the Apostle here delineates, I shall endeavour to represent him in his several graceful Properties, as they

(n) 1 Tim. 4. 13, 16. (o) 1 Tim. 4. 6.

they are laid before us in the Text, *e. gr.*

1. A good Minister of Jesus Christ, is one who is *very studious and industrious*: One that sincerely designs, and sedulously endeavours, with Fidelity, to discharge that Trust which is reposed in him by God. And he that doth so, may be confident of his Assistance and Blessing in his Work. 1 Tim. 1. 12. *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry.* This Property of a good Minister, may be extracted out of that Monitory Word which the Apostle here makes use of (*p*);

C 2

and

and is by our Translation render'd *Study*; by the vulgar Latin, *Be very careful* (q): by another, (having an eye to the Primitive Theme) *Make haste* (r). We may take in all, and then the Sense will be more pregnant, *q. d.* Lose no time, but presently set about, and effectually bestir thy self in the Execution of thy Ministerial Office and Duty. Excite, and preserve in thy self, such an active and vigorous Frame of Spirit, as stands in opposition to Slothfulness. Rom. 12. 11. *Not slothful in Business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord* (s). From hence we

(q) Sollicitè cura. (r) Æth. σπουδᾶς, festino, propero; and from thence comes σπουδάζω. Sedulò strenuè operam navo; contendo, enitor.
(s) τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηεῖς.

we may conclude, Of all Persons in the World, the good Ministers of Jesus Christ should not be idle or slothful, but studious and industrious in their proper Work, and persist therein with Alacrity, Activity, and Constancy.

The Reasons that may prevail with them, and engage them hereto, are many and weighty ; *e. gr.*

1st. They should be furnished with a more than vulgar Measure of sacred Knowledg, in the Doctrines and Mysteries of the Gospel, that they may declare the whole Counsel to the Edification of his Church. Moreover, they are set for the Defence of the Gospel (t) : and should endeavour

C 3

to

(t) Phil. 1. 17.

to be able, by sound Doctrine, to exhort, and convince the Gain-sayers, and to stop their Mouths (u). Now, most evident it is, that they who desire to be meetly qualified for such Undertakings, must give Attendance to Reading: They must meditate on these things, and give themselves wholly to them, that their Profiting may appear to all. It would be a great Reproach to Teachers of the Gospel, to be like those Teachers of the Law, whom the Apostle derides, 1 Tim. i. 7. *Desiring to be Teachers of the Law, yet understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* What think ye then will become of the
 Lazy

(u) Tit. i. 9. — τὸς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχων.
 Ver. 11. ἐπισκευάζων.

Lazy and Slothful, when the most Studious and Industrious, out of a deep Sense of their own Imperfections, cry out, And who is sufficient for these things?

2. A good Minister of Jesus Christ, will feel himself obliged to be *studious* and *industrious*, when he reflects upon that *blessed Work*, wherein his Employment lies, The Conversion and Salvation of precious immortal Souls; which ordinarily, are much concerned in his Sedulity and Fidelity. For though God doth confer his Grace, according to his own Sovereign Will and Pleasure; *for it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy*(x);

C 4

and

(x) Rom. 9. 16.

and he may choose the foolish Things of the World to confound the Wise; yet Ministers cannot in Faith, expect that God should give the *Increase*, unless, on their part, there be *Planting* and *Watering* (y): and that not in a remiss, or unconcerned Manner, but according to the Apostle's Example; Col. 1. 28, 29. *VVhom we preach, warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wisdom, that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his Working, which worketh in me mightily.*

3. The good Minister of Jesus Christ will see cause enough that
he

(y) 1 Cor. 3. 6.

he should be studious and industrious, when his Heart is under due Impressions of that *tremendous Account* which he must give to Jesus Christ. For such a time will certainly come. The Charge which the Apostle gives is terrible as a Clap of Thunder ; 2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing, and his Kingdom ; Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.* The Negligent will then find, that all Excuses and Evasions will be rejected and despised. It will avail nothing to plead, That *their other Businesses or Diversions* were so many, that they had neither *Time* nor *Inclination* to study or preach

preach the Gospel: for no Pretensions could secure the unprofitable, slothful Servant, from falling under that dreadful Sentence, *Take the Talent from him: — Cast the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth* (2).

*** This may suffice to have been spoken touching the first Property of a good Minister of Jesus Christ. He is one that is studious and industrious; that hastens to his Work with Alacrity, and persists in it with Constancy.

2dly. The second Property of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, is,
That

(2) *Matth.* 25. 28, 29, 30.

That he is one who chooseth and pursueth a right End, both in his Undertaking and Acting: He hath his Eye always upon the Mark; and all his Studies and Endeavours have a direct and proper Tendency to it: and that is, *That he may approve himself unto God.* What the Apostle prescribed to Timothy, he practised himself: 2 Cor 5. 9, 10. *Wherefore we labour (or endeavour) with an holy Ambition (a), that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him: For we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ.* Two Things the good Minister doth reach after.

(1.) That he may be approved.

(2.) That God may ratify his
Approbation. (1.) That

(a) φιλοτιμία; *ambimus: Rom. 15. 20. φιλοτιμία εὐαγγελίζεσθαι.*

(r.) That he may obtain an Approbation (b); and such an one, as is given after Trial: *Jam. 1. 12.* *Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation (c) (or Trial); for when he is tried (d), he shall receive the Crown of Life.* Men are sometimes too rash and precipitate, in passing their Judgment, and so may take *Brass for Gold*: But God searcheth the Heart, and will never approve any Person whom he hath not thorowly tried. When *Jesse's Sons* came before *Samuel*, he looked upon *Eliab*, and said, *Surely the Lord's Anointed is before me: But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his Countenance, nor on the*

(b) *ἐαυτὸν δόκιμον παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.* (c) *παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.* (d) *ὅτε δόκιμος γινώσκῃ.*

the Height of his Stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as Man seeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart. Happy then are they, who, notwithstanding their many Defects and Infirmities, can appeal to God for their Sincerity: Psal. 17. 3. Thou hast proved my Heart, and tried me in the Night, and shalt find nothing; i. e. nothing inconsistent with Uprightness or Sincerity.

(2.) That God may ratify his Approbation: for it is God who will pass the final and decisive Sentence: *It is not then, he who commendeth himself, (or is commended by others) that is approved, but he whom the Lord commendeth (e).*

Many

(e) Cor. 2 II. 13.

Many are they who are ambitious to purchase the good Opinion and Praise of Men, and *love it more than the Praise of God (f)*. But of all Persons in the World, it looks worst in a Minister of Jesus Christ to be *Animal gloria* ; to hunt after Applause, and to feed upon the Breath of popular Acclamations. What dismal Effects have sprung from the poisonous Root of affected Popularity ? Therefore the good Minister of Jesus Christ must fortify himself against the Insinuations of good Report, as well as against the Vexations of evil Report : and be content to *pass through Honour or Dishonour, evil and good Report ; and so* support himself with the Approbation of God, and the Testimony of a good Conscience.

This

(f) *Job. 12. 43.*

This Clause [*study to approve thy self unto God*] is well paraphrased by the Syriac, *Let it be thy Care to present thy self before God, with great Integrity* (g). Good Ministers are conscious to themselves of many Infirmities, and bewail them before the Lord; As their Unskillfulness in explicating the great Mysteries of the Gospel; the Remissness of their Zeal; their Entanglements, Diversions, Distractions, and such like: yet it may be a sweet Refreshment, and Relief to them, that they can say, That they have sincerely desired to serve the Lord in the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ.

And

(g) Tibi curæ sit sistere teipsum integerrimè coram Deo.

And great *Reason* there is, why a good Minister of Jesus Christ should study to approve himself unto God.

I. Because it is God who entrusts and employs him in the Ministration of the Gospel: And to him he must give an account of his Stewardship. If the *Office of the Ministry* were merely an *Humane Constitution*, and the Instructions, Rules and Measures, which Ministers were to be determined by, in the Execution of their Office, were all of *Man's Appointment*, then would it be sufficient for them so to demean and carry themselves therein, as to gain the Approbation of Men: *But if the Office, Work and Rule*, be from Heaven, and not of Men, then it is their Concernment, as well as their

their Duty, to seek the Approbation of God. The Apostle's Way of Reasoning in another like Instance, will, I think, guide us to what we are to conclude in this Case; *2 Tim. ii. 4. No Man that warreth, entangleth himself with the things of this Life, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a Soldier.* And may we not argue, à *Minori ad Majus*, He that is bound to the Lord Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, under his *Sacramentum Ministeriale*, ought not to entangle himself in Matters of a foreign Nature, especially when they are obstructive to his proper Work; much more, if inconsistent with it? but he should bend all his Thoughts, Cares and Endeavours to please him, who hath chosen him to be a Minister. When, I

D

say,

say, the Office is from God, yet that leaves room enough for Men, who have a delegated Power from Christ (in the ordinary Way) to try the Persons, who are to be admitted to the Execution of that Office. And having found them fit, *to ordain them with Fasting, Prayer, and Imposition of Hands*; and so solemnly to invest them therewith (b). Yet still it must remain unshaken, That Man doth not make the Ministry, neither may Man, by his proper Authority, appoint the Minister his Rule, nor apportionate his Work: For that belongs to the Lord Christ only; *Eph. 4. 8, to ver. 14. When he ascended up on high, he led Captivity captive,*

(b) *2 Tim. 2. 2. Tit. 1. 5.*

captive, and give Gifts unto Men:
~~—~~ *And he gave some Apostles, some*
Prophets, and some Evangelists, and
some Pastors and Teachers; for the
perfecting of the Saints, for the
Work of the Ministry, for the edify-
ing of the Body of Christ.

2. A good Minister of Jesus
Christ, should study to approve
himself unto God; because, from
him alone, he is to receive his full and
ultimate Reward. Sad and mise-
rable would be the Lot of a good
Minister of Jesus Christ, if the
Favour of Men and earthly Pre-
ferments were all that he might
look for after his greatest Sedu-
lity and Fidelity. The Apostle
Paul had, certainly, more in his
Eye; for he professeth, that it was
something else which kept him
from fainting and sinking under

all the Burdens of his Services and Sufferings; and that was, *That he looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; because the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal* *.

And a great and precious Promise they have to encourage them in their Labours, and to support them under their Burdens; *1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. Feed the Flock which is among you, (or in as much as in you lies); and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.* This may suffice to have been said, touching the second Property of a good Minister of Jesus Christ; He is one who

* 2 Cor. 4. 16,—18.

who studies to approve himself unto God.

3dly. His third Property, is, *That he is a Work-man, that needeth not to be ashamed.* There are two Branches in this Part of his Character.

(1.) If you look upon him *absolutely*; so he is a Workman.

(2.) If ye look also upon the *Modification* adjoined; so he is a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

1. A Workman he must be (i); and that Work which he is called unto, is no easy Employment, but very laborious; for the Word u-

D 3 fed

(i) ἐργάτης.

fed in the Text, is translated a Labourer; *Matth. 9. 37. The Labourers are few: And Ver. 38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth Labourers into his Harvest (k).* Neither is his Labour like to some kinds of Recreation; in which Men do but play, while they take a great deal of Pains: But it is hard Labour, even to Lassitude and Weariness, to the wasting of their Strength, and exhausting of their Spirits. For so doth the Scripture set forth the Working and Labouring of the good Ministers of Jesus Christ; *1 Thess. 5. 12. Know them that labour among you: τὸς κοπιῶντες (l).*
1 Tim.

(k) ἐργαταὶ ὀλίγοι: — ὅπως ἐκβάλῃ ἐργάτας.
 (l) κοπίαω, laboro, fatigor, lassor.

1 Tim. 5. 17. — especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine. This ye may find exemplified in two Instances; The Former is of Christ, when he was spent and tired out with his Journey, *Joh. 4. 6. Jesus therefore being wearied with his Journey, sat thus on the Well (m).* The Latter is of the Disciples, who had toiled out themselves all night, *Luke 5. 5. Master, we have toiled all night (n).* These places are produced to shew, That a good Minister of Jesus Christ is a Work-man, whose Employment requires very hard Labour; so that he hath no time allowed him for Idleness or Remis-

D 4 ness,

(m) κακοπαχὸς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοπορίας. (n) δι' ὅλης νυκτὸς κοπιῶσαντες.

ness, though some time be indulged to him for his Relaxation, through his Master's tender Compassion; *Mark 6. 31. And he said unto them, Come your selves apart, and rest a-while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.* However God may deal with such as stand all the day idle in the *Market-place*; yet, doubtless, he will not endure any Loiterers in his *Vine-yard*, in which even the Fig-tree, which was barren, would not be allowed to have a Standing (o); much less might the Dresser of the *Vine-yard* expect to be tolerated, if he brought forth no Fruit. Our Saviour told his Apostles, *that he had*

(o) *Luk. 13. 6, 7.*

had ordained them, that they should bring forth Fruit: and that Fruit was their converting of Souls to God, as the Apostle explains it, Rom. 1:13.—That I may have some Fruit among you also, as among other Gentiles. The Ministers of Christ may intercede for the Enlargement of the time of God's Patience toward an unfruitful People; but then it is upon their Engagement to use double Diligence in cultivating of them: *Luke 13. 8. Lord, let it alone this year also, that I may dig about it, and dung it.*

Thus ye have one of the Apellations by which a good Minister of Jesus Christ is denominated, that he is a Work-man. But because I told you, that my Design in this Discourse would be to give you some distinct Representation of
such

such an one, I think it necessary to add some other Titles by which the Spirit of God doth notify him to us, that ye may see him in a clearer Light, and form more perfect conceptions of him. The good Ministers, then, of Jesus Christ, have *two sorts of Titles* conferred upon them:

Some, that set forth *their Dignity*:

Others, that bind them to their *Duty*.

In reciting the Former, I shall be very brief: yet may I not silently pass them over, lest I should be injurious both to them and you.

1. Their Titles that do set forth their Dignity.

Of

Of these I shall mention four only.

(1.) They have the glorious Name of *Angels* set upon them (p); Rev. 1. 20. *The seven Stars are the Angels of the seven Churches.* Angels, we know, are the highest Rank, and most noble Order among all the Creatures; And they have the Denomination of Angels, because they are the *Messengers* of the great God. And such are all good Ministers of Jesus Christ. *Ambassadors*; 2 Cor. 5. 20. *Now then, we are Ambassadors for Christ.* *Messengers*; Hag. 1. 13. *Then said Haggai, the Lord's Messenger, in the Lord's Message, to the People.* This
Title

(p) 𐤓𐤏𐤋𐤁, ἄγγελος, Legatus, Nuncius.

Title was not appropriated to him, as a Prophet immediately called and inspired, but it is communicated to all those who are appointed and authorized by God to deliver his Messages to his People; *Mal.* 2. 7. *The Priest's Lips should preserve Knowledge; and they should seek the Law at his Mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

(2.) They are called *Elders* (q); *Acts* 14. 23. *When they had ordained the Elders in every Church:* *Tit.* 1. 5. — *Ordain Elders in every City.* The name of *Elders* was honourable among both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews dignified their Rulers, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, with the Title of *Elders*: And so

(q) עֲלֵמִים, πρεσβύτεροι, Seniores.

fo did the Greeks use the ſame, to ſignalize ſuch as were of eminency for their *VVorth* or *Office*. For thus doth one of them inform us, We call (ſaith he) thoſe Perſons *Elders*, whom we eſteem the *beſt*, or moſt excellent, and the *Ancients* (r): There are few, who have not heard of the Roman Senate and Senators (s). And Antiquaries tell us, that the Saxon word *Aldermen*, hath the Signification of *Ancients*, or *Elder-men*.

(3.) They are denominated *Guides* (t), ſuch as have the Conduct of others, and go before them in the Way of Religion; *Heb. 13.7.* *Remember them which have the Rule* (or

(r) ἀγῖστοι καὶ τὰς παλαιότητας. (s) Senatus & Senatores. (t) ἡγούμενοι, qui præcundo monſtrant viam.

(or are the Guides) over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God. And ver. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give account. The Ministers of Christ have a Power to lead, though not to compel (u).

(4.) They are dignified with the Name of Presidents (w), such as are over others in the Lord; 1 Tim. 5. 17. The Elders that rule (or preside) well, account worthy of double Honour.

I shall not farther enlarge upon those Titles that set forth their Dignity; yet somewhat may be inferred

(u) Potestatem $\eta\gamma\alpha\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\chi\eta\varsigma$, ducendi; non $\alpha\gamma\gamma\omicron\tau\omicron\chi\eta\varsigma$ cogendi. (w) $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\varsigma\tau\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu\varsigma$ $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\varsigma\tau\omega\tau\epsilon\varsigma$.

ferred that is obvious to every understanding Observer ; That Men ought to honour those whom God delights to honour. Or, let me lay this before you, in the Words of the Apostle, 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. *And we beseech you, Brethren, know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. To know them (x), not only that ye may distinguish them from other Persons, or to salute them when ye meet them, or to have some friendly Conversation with them ; but to yield them such Observance as may testify that Honour and Obedience which ye owe to him that sends them, and the Messages which they bring you in his Name, and clothed with his*
Autho-

(x) *is Novus.*

Authority. And all this must be done not slightly, and out of Complement, but in Reality and Sincerity. And then, for the Degree of your esteem of them, it must not be after a low and vulgar rate, but raised to a double height in Comparison: *very highly* (γ).

Let no Man think that I mentioned these magnificent Titles conferred on the Ministers of Christ, out of Ostentation or Ambition; for they have learn'd to bear Contempt, when cast only upon their Persons, or their outward State in the World; but yet they are obliged to *magnify their Office*, when Men do despise or reproach it. And for this, the Apostle's Example is their Warrant;

(γ) ὑπερῆκτα, super ex abundanti.

rant, Rom. 11. 13. — *Inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine Office (x). They know very well, that they are but earthen Vessels, yet they carry an inestimable Treasure; Pearls in Oyster-shells, 2 Cor. 4. 7. (a). That all the Glory may be ultimately carried up to God: For they preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus to be the Lord, and themselves your Servants for Jesus sake.*

This may suffice to have been spoken of the Titles that set forth their Dignity: I shall be a little more copious in those that bind them to their Duty: And I shall single out such as are of like import

(x) τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω. (a) ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστράκοις σκεύουσιν.

port with that of a Work-man,
mentioned in the Text. As,

1. They are stiled *Bishops*; *Acts*
20. 28. *Take heed to your selves, and*
to the Flock, over which the Holy
Ghost hath made you Over-seers. If the
Greek word (b) had been rendred
here, as it is generally in other pla-
ces, it might have been translated
Bishops. The Apostle tells us, *1 Tim.*
3. 1. *He that desireth the Office of a*
Bishop, desireth a good VVork (c).
The Apostle calls it a *VVork*, not an
Honour, saith *Grotius*; or, as ano-
ther glosseth, *A Work*, not a *Dig-*
nity, or a more delicate and softer
kind of Life. Let such as glory in
the Name, do the Work of a Bishop,
and all good Men will pay them
due

(b) ἐπισκόπος. (c) ὅτι τις ἐπισκοπῆς ὀρέγεται
καλῶ ἔργα ἐπιθυμεῖ.

due respect. Sure we are, that the Charge that is given them, is very strict: 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2. *The Elders which are among you, Exhort, who also am an Elder: — Feed the Flock of God, which is among you, taking the Oversight thereof; — or doing the Work of a Bishop toward them (d).* And what the Work of the Primitive Bishop was, the Learned Dr. Hamond hath informed us; “It was (saith he) the Work of the Bishop, to be the Mouth of the People, to offer up their Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions and Thanksgivings to Almighty God. To receive to Baptism those that, upon due trial, were found meet for it: To administer the Lord’s Supper; which, in the first times
E 2 “of

(d) ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥΝΤΕΣ.

“ of Christianity, was done very
 “ frequently: To visit the Sick, and
 “ to pray for them: To stop the
 “ Mouths of Gain-sayers; to ad-
 “ monish disorderly Walkers: To
 “ cast out the Obstinate and Incor-
 “ rigible: To receive Penitents in-
 “ to the Church, after sufficient
 “ trial made of their Repentance:
 “ To take care of the Poor, Or-
 “ phans, Widows and Strangers.
 “ And, in short, to attend to all the
 “ Affairs of the Church of God.
 He that will conscientiously give
 up himself to all these Services,
 will need no other Argument to
 convince him of the Labourious-
 ness of that Office.

2. The Ministers of Christ have
 the Name of *Pastors* set upon them,
 as very directive, to shew them
 their Work and Employment;

Ephes.

Ephes. 4. 11. Some Pastors and Teachers (e) : 1 Pet. 5. 2. — Feed the Flock that is among you (f) ; i. e. Do all things that belong to the Office of a Pastor. The Shepherd's Work in the literal Sense, is very busy and toilsom. Jacob, who had been long exercised in it, gives this account of it, Gen. 31. 40. Thus was I in the day, the Drought consumed me, and the Frost by night ; and my Sleep departed from me. Neither can we suppose, that a Shepherd, in the Metaphorical Sense, should exonerate himself of all Care, and indulge himself in his Ease. It was never known that a Title to an Office should discharge a Man from his proper Work and Employment.

E 3

We

(e) ποιμένας, καὶ διδασκάλους. (f) ποιμαίνετε
το ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

We may infer what God requires and expects from those whom he constitutes Shepherds, whether in a Political, or in an Ecclesiastical Sense, by the sharp Reproofs and severe Menaces, which he useth against the Negligent: Ezek. 34. 2, 3, 4. *Son of Man, prophesy against the Shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord against the Shepherds, VVo to the Shepherds of Israel, that feed themselves: Should not the Shepherds feed the Flock? The Diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which was lost: but with Force and with Cruelty, have ye ruled them. I should desire no more of any*

any Man, that thinks a Pastor's Life to be a Life of Ease and Diver-
tissement; than to make experi-
ment; though it be but among a
few, and those well-disposed Peo-
ple, and he shall quickly find how
much his Work will daily grow up-
on his hands: To satisfy the Doubt-
ing and Scrupulous; To set in joint
the Bones which have been dislo-
cated or broken, by the Falls of such
as have been overtaken or surprized
by Sin (g). To bear with the In-
firmities, Slowness of Capacity, and
Untowardness of such as he labours
to instruct: To apply suitable Re-
medies to their various Spiritual
Distempers: To look after, and
bring back such as have gone a-
stray,

E 4

(g) Gal. 6. 1. — εἰς τὸν περὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν
πνι καὶ ἐκ τῶν ματι καὶ τῶν ὁσίων.

stray, either through their own Levity, or the Craftiness of Seducers: With Patience, Pity and Compassion, to bear with those that oppose themselves. And besides all this, meekly to treat the Petulant and Exorbitant, and to cicure or tame such as have altogether broken the Yoke, and burst the Bonds.

3. They are called *Servants or Ministers*. Sometimes with respect to the Subject or Matter of their Ministration; and so they are stiled *Ministers of the Word*; Luk. 1. 2. *Even as they delivered them to us, which from the beginning were Eye-witnesses and Ministers of the Word (h)*. Sometimes to set forth their Relation to their Lord and Master,

(h) ὡς ἡμεῖς μαρτυροῦμεν τὸν λόγον.

Master, to whom, or in whose Service, they do minister: So they are *the Ministers of Christ*, 1 Cor. 4.

1. *Let a Man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ* (i.) The Word made use of in the original Greek, translated [*Minister*] doth primarily signify a *Rower*, one that doth tug and sweat at the Oar (k). The Poet could say, That they who handle the Oar, stand in need of two things; Of God, to help them with a good Wind, and of their own Labour. The Appellation then of a Rower, being, in a Metaphorical Sense, applied to a Servant, or Minister of Christ, may admonish him to continue his Care and Industry

(i) ὡς ὑποτάκτους Χριστοῦ. (k) The Primitive Verb is ἐρέσω, remigo: but in the common Use, it is enlarged, and extended to signify a Servant in general.

dustry without any intermission; for, ordinarily, the Wind and Tide are against him. And when it is so, if the Rower sit still but a little, his Vessel may be carried far backward, and he may lose more in *one* Hour than he can recover in *many*. If a Minister be remiss, when false Doctrines, or Immoralities in Practice, like a Tempest, bear down all before them, such Disorders will quickly follow, as will not soon or easily be rectified or reformed. Let him therefore animate himself with the Apostle's Spirit and Resolution, Gal. 2. 5. *To whom we gave place by Subjection, no not for an hour, that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with you.*

4. They are frequently stiled *Ministers or Servants*; but by a Word, differing very much in the
Original

Original from the former, which also doth engage them to much Diligence and hard Labour; and that is, διακονῶ. This Word is used sometimes in the strict Acceptation, and then it is rendred a *Deacon*; as 1 Tim. 3. 8. *Likewise also must the Deacons be grave -- (1).* The occasion of erecting that Order in the Church, ye may find recorded in Acts 6. and their proper Work was, To take care of, and to manage the Stock of the Church; and this, in ver. 2. is set forth by their *serving of Tables (m)*: but the Use of the Word in the larger Acceptation, is far more frequent; to denote, *A Minister of the New-Testament*, 2 Cor. 3. 6. *The Minister*

(1) διακόνες σώφρονες ὀφειλόμενοι. (m) διακονεῖν τραπέζαις.

ster of God, 2 Cor. 6. 4. A Minister of Jesus Christ, 1 Tim. 4. 6. That which I intend by adding this Appellation, is as a farther Demonstration, That the Calling of a good Minister requires much Industry and Diligence in those who will discharge their Duty with Fidelity: for the Verb from which the Word, which we render [Minister] is derived, doth signify to make haste, or to work (n).

Thus ye have had an Account of this Property of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, That he is a Workman: To which, I have added four Titles more of the same import, because

(n) δῆλον is from κοῦω; which Etymologists deduce from κοῦς, Dust; because, they say, such as run Races or work abroad, do raise the Dust.

because this seems most conspicuous and eminent, in that Character which the Text sets upon him : And there remains a little more to be spoken touching that Adjunct, which is added concerning him ; For the Apostle did not satisfy himself with calling him a Work-man, but in a way of Illustration or Amplification, he subjoins, *That he is a Work-man that need not be ashamed.* The Text hath it in one Word, *unashamed* (o) ; and this leads Interpreters into several ways of explaining the Sense and Meaning of it. For some understand it *actively*. A good Minister must be a well-resolved Person; that no Shame, Disgrace, or Reproaches of Men, should daunt

(o) ἀναισχυντος.

daunt or discourage him from professing or preaching the Gospel. The Apostle *Paul* was well fortified against those Impressions, which Shame might make upon weaker Minds; for he saith, *Rom. 1. 16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (p)*, and often mentioneth his *Parrhesia*: His speaking openly, with Liberty and Confidence; as *Acts 9. 29. And he spake boldly in the Name of the Lord Jesus. — Acts 13. 46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, — (q). Neither could all the Calumnies raised against him, nor Injuries done him, make him ashamed; 2 Tim. 1. 12. For which Cause, I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed.*

(p) ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. (q) παρρησιασμένοι.

ashamed. — Impudence is, indeed, most hateful in an evil Matter, and draws down the Wrath of God upon brazen-faced Sinners; *Jer. 6. 15.* *Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush, therefore they shall fall among them that fall.* — He hath an hard Province who is diepute with Ignorance, when it is patronized by Impudence. For how shall he instruct, or convince, those who are not ashamed of Impertinencies, Non-sense, or most gross Absurdities? But when the Truths of God are to be vindicated, *The Faith which was at once delivered to the Saints,* to be contended for, and Holiness to be propugned, the good Minister of Jesus Christ should be *bold as a Lion,* and pray earnestly to God for that
Grace

Grace which was promised to the Prophet Ezekiel, Chap. 3. ver. 8, 9. *Behold, I have made thy Face strong against their Faces, and thy Forehead against their Foreheads, as an Adamant; harder than a Flint have I made thy Forehead. Fear them not, neither be dismayed at their Looks, though they be a rebellious House.* This may suffice for the active Sense; and this way doth the Syriac Version look; *Shew thy self a Work-man, without Confusion:* and many of the Greek Commentators are reported to concur therein.

But there is also a *passive Sense*, which may well be admitted, and that our own Translators do prefer, and (as I think) doth best suite with the Contexture of the Apostle's Discourse; That a good Minister should so carry it, in all his
Mini-

Ministerial Work, that *he need not be ashamed.* The Apostle doth apparently insist upon that Antithesis which is between a contentious Sophister, who strives about Words that are unprofitable and vain, and a Work-man that needeth not be ashamed. When the Design and Management of a fallacious fiery Disputation is detected, the Work-man hath abundant cause to be ashamed, for *his Folly will be made manifest to all Men.* But when the good Minister's Work is most narrowly searched and sifted, he may hold up his Face *without spot*; yea, (his Infirmities being graciously covered and pardoned) *he may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Christ at his Coming.*

This may suffice for the third Property of a good Minister of Je-

66 *A good Minister*

Jesus Christ ; He is a Work-man that needeth not to be ashamed.

4thly. The Character of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, is concluded with this Property, *That he is one who rightly divides the Word of Truth.* For the clearing of this, two Things are to be attended unto, which may be dispatched with convenient Brevity.

(1.) What is the Subject or Matter about which his principal Study and Labour is to be employed, and that is, *The Word of Truth.*

(2.) What is incumbent upon him, with respect to the Word of Truth ; and that is, *That he rightly divide it.*

1. It is the Word of Truth, in, and about which, the Thoughts
and

and Studies of a good Minister of Jesus Christ are to be exercised: Not in doubtful Disputations, nor in the bare Opinions and Dictates of Men, though of great Reputation and Authority: Much less in framing *cunningly devised Fables*, or golden Legends, which may raise in the Ignorant and Credulous, Admiration, Superstition and Rapture; but in the Considerate and Prudent, Disdain and Indignation. The Apostle hath informed us, How the great Apostacy from the Christian Faith, was to be managed and carried on, 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2.

—By giving heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils; speaking Lies in Hypocrisy: but the good Minister must firmly and entirely adhere to the Word of Truth. The great Repository whereof, is the

F 2 Holy

Holy Scripture, which bears upon it that glorious Inscription, *The Scripture of Truth*, Dan. 10. 21. (r) and *the VVord of Truth, the Gospel of Salvation*, Eph. 1. 13. and again, *The VVord of the Truth of the Gospel*. From hence must the good Minister derive, confirm, and improve all his Doctrine: *For the whole Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good VVorks*. They then offer an intolerable Affront to the Divine Majesty, who *speak wickedly for God, or talk deceitfully for him*, Job 13. 7.

2. What

(r) בכתב אמת *en yegaphē alētheias ó.*

2. What is the proper Work of a good Minister of Christ, wherein he is to be occupied with reference to this Word of Truth ; and that is, *rightly to divide it* (s) ; which cannot be understood in a literal, but in a metaphorical Sense. The Conjectures of Men about the explicating of the Metaphor, have been various. Some think it spoken in way of Allusion, to the Priest's cutting abroad, and dividing the Sacrifices into their several Parts, in which they were very curious and exact. Others conceive, that the Apostle hath respect to those (t) *Sections*, into which the Book of the Law was divided by the Jews, in order to their reading of

F 3 it

(s) ὀρθοτομεῖν. (t) פסוקים.

it in their Synagogues. Others think the Metaphor to be taken from Mothers or Nurses, who cut the Meat which they give their Children into small pieces, that they may the better receive and digest it. But not to insist upon the Critical Part, I think the Sense and Meaning is well expressed by the vulgar Latin, *Rightly handling the Word of Truth* (u); and by the Syriac, *Rightly preaching* — (w). But if we expect something instructive from the Metaphor made use of, I suppose it may afford us some light if compare these Passages of Scripture together. (1.) The Apostle doth stile the Ministers of Christ, *Stewards of the Mysteries of God,*

(u) Rectè tractantem. (w) Rectè prædicantem.

God, 1 Cor. 4. 1. (2.) Our Saviour assigns this as one Property of a good and faithful Steward, who is set over the Household, that he may give to every one *their portion of Meat* in due season, Luk. 12. 42. (x) distributing to every one their proper *Dimensum*, or Allotment: as Exod 16. 16. *Every Man according to his Eating*. Herein then lies much of the good Minister's Prudence, Care and Tenderness, so to divide the Word of Truth, that every one may have their proper Portion: *He must provide Milk for Babes, and strong Meat for them that are of full Age*, Heb. 5. 13, 14. accommodating his Teaching to the Necessities and Capacities of the

F 4 Hearers.

(x) τὸ ἀπέναντον.

Hearers. In this, their Lord and Master Christ went before them, and hath left them an Example, *For he spake the Word as the People were able to hear; i. e.* to understand, and profit by it; *Mar. 4. 33.* It is a singular Grace or Mercy that God bestows on his Ministers, *The Tongue of the Learned, that they should speak a Word in season (1).* A Word in season to the Weary, that they may be refreshed: A Word in season to the Sorrowful, that they may be comforted: A Word to the Doubting, that they may be settled and established: A Word to the Secure and Impenitent, that they may be awakened and convinced; and so to others,
as

(1) *Isaiah 50. 4.*

as their Case and Condition may require, for then is the Word of Truth rightly divided.

And thus I have endeavoured to represent before you the Delineation of a good Minister of Jesus Christ, according to those four Properties which are suggested in, and from the Text.

And now, if ye have attended unto, and duly considered that Character which hath been given of a good Minister, I presume that many of you will be apprehensive, that it was not without reason that I intimated, in the entrance upon this Discourse, that I should hold up before you a Glass, or Mirror, wherein ye might see the Portraiture

traicture of that good Minister (whose Funeral we, this Day, solemnize) to be reflected. It would be no difficult Undertaking to draw the Parallel, and shew the Correspondence in every Particular: But that Performance would require near as much time as that which has been already filled up: Ye must therefore be contented with such short Recollections, as I can recover upon the hasty Exercise of my Thoughts.

The reverend and worthy Minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. *Richard Steel*, was born in *Cheshire* near *Nantwich*, on the tenth Day of *May*, *Anno Dom.* 1629, and left this World *November* the 16th, *Anno Dom.* 1692, so that he died in the 64th Year of his Age. Where he had his Education in his younger

ger Years, hath not come to my notice: but I find in the *Fasti Oxonienses*, That *Richard Steel* was Master of Arts of St. *John's* College in *Cambridg*, and was Incorporated into the University of *Oxford*, *March* the 27th 1656. He is there mentioned among the *Oxford-Writers*; and several of his Printed Works are recited. When he entred into the sacred Ministry is unknown to me; but after that he was invested therewith, I am informed that he did exercise it in divers places, as the Providence of God disposed of him, until he came to *London*, which, (as I conjecture) was about 24 or 25 Years ago: and here he hath continued, preaching the Gospel in and about the City, as God gave him Liberty and Opportunity, until

til he put a period both to his *Labours and Life*. That he did eminently discharge the Duty of a good Minister, will appear by some few Remarks, whereby it will be made evident, that he wrote very fairly after that Copy which I have been decyphering unto you: *e.gr.*

1. Our Apostle, the more to recommend a good Minister, doth shew, How unlike he is to a contentious wrangling Sophister, which lives in the fire of Disputing and Dividing. But it may be truly said of our worthy Brother, as it was of *Caleb, He was a Man of another Spirit*. He hated Contentions and Divisions; he greatly bewailed them; and used his uttermost Endeavour to promote Union and Concord. That this was his Temper, is clearly demonstrated by his
Discourse

Discourse against uncharitable Contentions in the Church of God. Which Discourse is printed in the 4th Volume of the Casuistical Morning-Exercises, preached in *October 1689*, wherein he shewed a deep Judgment, and a very prudent pacifick Spirit.

2. The Apostle describes a good Minister of Jesus Christ, by his Studiousness and Diligence. In which, it must be concluded, that our deceased Brother was very exemplary. For his Sermons were composed and written with mature Digestion, though with much Brevity; which manifest them to have been the Product of many serious Thoughts; and considering his Constancy in Preaching, must needs require very hard Study. His *Manuscript Notes* of his Sermons

mons are exceeding many, and deserve to be carefully preserved. When we compute the time, that must necessarily have been spent about his ordinary Labours, we may judg, that a Person of more than common Attainments, had filled it up very well: Yet he redeemed so much besides, as enabled him to compose and publish several *pious and profitable Treatises*. Of which, I think, it may be of good use to annex a Catalogue: As,

(1.) *An Antidote against Distractions*; Or, An Endeavour to serve the Church in the daily Case of Wandrings in the Worship of God. This Treatise came to my hands before I ever saw the Face of the Author; and I have heard many to bless God for it, and to profess

profess that they were greatly edified by it. What Acceptance this Book hath found with such as are serious in Religion, may be estimated by the several Impressions of it. There is one Circumstance more that relates to it, which may not be passed over, *viz.* That it was written by Mr. Steel when he was in Prison in *Wales* for Non-conformity: Here we find that exemplified, which was once the Case of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 2. 9. *Wherein I suffer Trouble as an Evil-Doer, even unto Bonds: but the Word of God is not bound.* And as, while he was in Prison, he endeavoured to edify the Church of God by his Writings; so he did also by his Preaching, while he was under Confinement, seek the Salvation of those who came to hear him.

him. And it is to be hoped, that it may be said of some of them, as *Paul* did of *Onesimus*, that they were begotten again by him, while he was in Bonds.

(2.) *The Husband-man's Calling*; shewing the Excellencies, Temptations, Graces and Duties of the Christian Husband-man.

(3.) *A plain Discourse of Uprightness*; shewing the Properties and Privileges of an upright Man.

(4.) *The Trades-man's Calling*: A Discourse concerning the Nature, Necessity, Choice, &c. of a Calling in general; and Directions for the right managing of the Trades-man's Calling in particular.

(5.) *A*

(5.) *A Discourse of Old-Age; Tending to the Instruction, Caution and Comfort of Aged Persons.*

(6.) *A Scheme and Abstract of the Christian Religion, Comprized in fifty two Heads, with the Texts of Scripture on which they are grounded. And some short Indications, How they were more largely handled.*

(7.) Besides his Discourse against uncharitable Contentions, printed among the Sermons in the 4th Volume of the Casuistical Morning-Exercises; there are also other Sermons of his printed: As, (1.) *The Duties of Husbands and Wives* toward each other; in the Supplement of the Morning Exercise at Cripple-gate; 1674.

(2.) *Believers Right to the Cup in the Lord's Supper: In the Morning-Exercise against Propriety, 1675.*

(3.) *What are the Hindrances and Helps to a good Memory, in spiritual Things; In the Continuation of the Morning-Exercises, Questions, and Cases of Conscience, 1683.*

These are the Books which were published by our Reverend Brother; by the diligent Reading whereof, private Christians may, by God's Blessing, be much improved in their spiritual Growth.

3. A good Minister of Jesus Christ will study to approve himself unto God: And to do so, we may be assured, was the constant Care and Endeavour of our deceased Brother. For he was circum-

spect;

spot, unblameable and exemplary
in the whole Course of his Con-
versation, and the Exercise of his
Ministry; who might, through
Grace, have taken up the Apostle's
Words, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Our rejoicing
is this, the Testimony of our Con-
science, that in Simplicity and godly
Sincerity, not with fleshy Wisdom,
but by the Grace of God, we have had
our Conversation in the World.
And now, we doubt not, but that
God's Approbation of him, is per-
fectly assured, by his actual Admis-
sion of him into his Presence, where
there is fulness of Joy, and at whose
Right-hand are Pleasures for ever-
more.

4. A good Minister of Jesus
Christ, is a Work-man that need
not to be ashamed: His abundant
Labours do manifest that he was

a constant and diligent Work-man; and the Lord Christ did so assist and help him in his Work, that upon an impartial Review, he needed not to have been ashamed of it. He had a singular Faculty of saying much in a little. The Subjects which he discoursed upon, were practical and profitable. Since our Conjunction, that we laboured together in the Service of Christ, he preached over *the Parable of the wise and foolish Virgins*, in *Matt. 25.* Then he spent a considerable time in resolving many *practical Cases of Conscience*, with great Plainness and Perspicuity; both for Instruction and Satisfaction. His last Undertaking, was to treat of the *Attributes of God.* They are a rich Mine of spiritual Treasures; but they are also a vast and boundless Ocean:

Ocean: Each of them are so large a Field, that the most searching and illuminated Understanding cannot reach its Limits; yet he could contract his Discourses, that usually he allotted but one Sermon for each Attribute. His last Sermon was upon the *Goodness of God*; which he concluded with an Exhortation to make a present Choice of God for our God; and his last Words were close and piercing, fit to make a lasting Impression, [Ye cannot make a better Choice, and are eternally undone if ye make a worse.] The Contemplation of the Attributes of God must needs have filled him with Ravishment, while he viewed them, though but as in a Glass, darkly. But now he is gone to those Regions of Light and Love, where all Mists

are dispelled; and there he hath such a Knowledge of them, as they who are cuffled up with Mortality, cannot comprehend.

5. He was a Pastor, who made it his business to ever see, and feed his Flock. He desired to know his Sheep by name: He often visited those who were his peculiar Charge, and endeavoured to edify them, with some serious Discourse about their Soul-Concernments, enquiring after their Proficiency; resolving their Doubts, encouraging and directing them, as their Case did require. He was careful and exact in observing whether any of them failed in their Attendance upon the Ordinances of God: especially if he missed any of them at the Lord's Supper, once or twice, he would be sure to send to them; and

and (on the first Opportunity) to enquire of them, What it was that kept them away?

6. As a good Minister of Jesus Christ, he was very dextrous and skillful in rightly dividing the Word of Truth. In every Sermon he was careful to provide Milk for Babes, and strong Meat for grown Men. His Stile was easy, familiar, though far from being loose, careless or rustick: But his Matter was always substantial and weighty; and so, by a rare Composition, his Discourses were framed and attempered, that the Meanest might learn, and those of higher Attainments, meet with nothing to be nauseated.

7. As in his Preaching he made it appear, That he was richly stored with Scripture-Know-

ledg; so in his Praying, he gave evident Proof, That the Spirit of Grace and Supplication was plentifully poured out upon him: for he performed that holy Duty orderly, perspicuously, seriously and affectionately, to the exciting of Devotion in those that joined with him.

These Instances are sufficient to demonstrate, That the Character of a good Minister of Jesus Christ was truly exemplified in him.

As to the Circumstances of his *last Sickness and Death*, I have but little to insist upon, because, I think, that generally all of you were as well acquainted with them as my self. On the Lord's Day, which was the 13th of this instant

instant *November*, he preached in this Place in the Morning, and at *Hogsdon* in the Afternoon. On Monday he visited several Friends in *London*, and seemed to be as lively and vigorous, as usually he had been for a long time. He had been afflicted with the Tifick for many Years, otherwise he was as vegeate and active, as most who arrived at his Years. In the Evening he repaired to a Friend's House in *Cheapside*, where he intended to lodg that Night: But finding himself under great Indisposition, he was carried to his own House in a Coach, about ten of the Clock. The next Day, he rose, and seemed to be somewhat revived, but kept his Chamber all that Day. On the Wednesday he continued in his Bed very faint and shot-breathed.

He

He had the Assistance of a very able Physician, his intimate Friend, who took the best Method with him that his Art could direct unto; but our Days are determin'd, and the number of our Months is with God, which we cannot pass. He complain'd not of any Pain, and the use of his Reason and Senses continued to the very last; and about ten of the Clock at Night, without any Struggle or Pangs, he quietly gave up the Ghost, finding a very short and easy Passage to his eternal Rest. Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.

Having given this short Account of our Reverend Brother, I shall address

of Jesus Christ.

26

address my self, in a few Words, to those who attended upon his Ministry, and conclude.

Be deeply affected with this sharp Dispensation of Providence. Your loving, laborious and faithful Pastor, is removed from you. He will never more instruct you, nor pray with you, nor pray particularly for you, (at least, the Scripture gives no Assurance thereof) yet we may hope, that many Prayers which he put up in his Lifetime for his Children, Friends and Neighbors, are recorded in Heaven, and may, in God's due time, bring down Blessings upon them.

Many of you do profess, that ye had a very great esteem for him. Now make it appear, that your Affections were real and radicated. I shall press you with our Saviour's Test,

Test, or Trial of his Disciples Love to him, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*: So, if ye sincerely loved your good Minister, let your Conversations be correspondent to that holy Doctrine which he taught you. To commend a Preacher, and yet to live contrary to his Doctrine, is to affront and deride him. An impenitent, unreformed Sinner, who lives in Pride, Earthliness, Envy, Sensuality and Passionateness, and the like Immoralities, cannot be a cordial Friend to a faithful Minister. It is the great Honour of a Teacher, when his Hearers are good Proficients in the School of Christ; but the Ignorant and Prophane, are a Reproach to him. Many will be apt to impute the Non-proficiency of the Scholar, to the want of

of Skill or Diligence in the Ma-
 sters. Slack not, but increase your
 Diligence to promote the Edifica-
 tion and Salvation of your Souls,
 now when your Teacher is remo-
 ved. This will be one Evidence
 of your Sincerity, and that ye were
 acted from an internal, vital Prin-
 ciple. A living Man moves; and
 a Clock, or Machin, moves; but
 there is a vast Difference between
 their Motions: The one moves
 from a *vital Principle*, the other on-
 ly from *Springs or Weights*. Let
 it never be said of any of you, as it
 was said of *Joash*, *That after the*
Death of Jehojada, he left the House
of the Lord. Could your Pastor
 speak to you, I suppose, he might
 well use the Words of the Apostle,
 (which I heartily recommend to
 you)

24 A good Minister, &c.

you) Phil. 2. 12, 13. *Wherefore,*
my beloved Brethren, as ye have al-
ways obeyed, not as in my Presence
only, but now much more in my Ab-
sence: work out your own Salvation
with Fear and Trembling. For it is
God that worketh in you, both to will
and to do, of his good Pleasure.

F L N I S.

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